

NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture



6013 Lakeside Boulevard
Indianapolis, IN 46278
www.in.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA PROVIDES UP TO \$1.7 MILLION FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS

Grants will develop and evaluate technology to improve fish and wildlife habitat

INDIANAPOLIS, April 5, 2006—U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) last week announced that up to \$1.7 million will be available through competitive grants to develop and evaluate technological tools for fish and wildlife habitat improvements.

"This grant competition provides an opportunity to enhance critical fish and wildlife habitat on private agricultural lands in Indiana," said Xavier Montoya, acting State Conservationist for NRCS in Indiana. "With most of Indiana's 22 million acres of privately-owned land involved in agriculture, these grants could enrich fish and wildlife habitat here."

Individual grants will range from \$10,000 to \$200,000. NRCS will distribute the funds through a national competitive process. Applicants must provide nonfederal matching funds for at least 50 percent of the project cost, up to half of which may come from in-kind contributions. An exception allows for limited resource and beginning farmers and ranchers, tribes, and community-based organizations representing these groups to provide up to 75 percent of project matching funds from in-kind contributions.

Potential applicants include state and local governments; federally recognized tribes; and non-governmental organizations, including colleges and universities. In their project proposals, applicants must say how they will develop, test, implement and transfer innovative solutions that benefit fish and wildlife on cropland, grassland, forestland, riparian areas, wetlands, streams, rivers, vernal pools and areas where farmland and urban land meet. Proposals are due on April 27, 2006.

Projects can be single or multi-purpose and can run from one to three years. They must address the following natural resource concerns:

- effects of buffers, field borders and riparian areas on fish and wildlife;
- improvements to wetland restoration and management practices;
- grassland establishment and management for wildlife;
- evaluation of fisheries habitat, stream restoration and management;
- use of electronic technology, including Geographic Information Systems, to measure fish and wildlife response to conservation practices; and,
- improvements of fish and wildlife management systems for limited resource and beginning farmers and ranchers and Native American tribes.

For more information about the wildlife announcement of funding, please visit the eGrants Web site at <http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?mode=VIEW&oppId=8643> and click on “Full Announcement.”

#

Contacts:

Xavier Montoya, Acting State Conservationist, (317) 290-3200

Michael McGovern, Public Affairs Specialist, (317) 290-3200, ext. 324

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.